

**Pride of the Prairie  
Local Foods Consumer Survey  
Comprehensive Final Report  
1/14/02**

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**Supported by :  
West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership  
Prairie Renaissance Morris/Blandin Community Investment Partnership**



## Introduction

During August and September 119 People were surveyed in the Morris Area.

- **34 Community** members from a local church and other community groups
- **39 Organization** affiliates including board members from the West Central Regional Partnership, Prairie Renaissance and the Pomme de Terre Co-op
- **34 Students** from a University of Minnesota Morris biology class
- **12 Extension home study** participants

## Purpose

The purpose of the survey was to: **(1)** Gain consumer feedback and perspectives on the concept of “local foods” and their views on the Pride of the Prairie initiative.

**(2)** Encourage people’s careful consideration of a broad range of food-related issues and their role in the food system. **(3)** Determine what impacts people’s food buying decisions and what they consider important regarding the production of their food.

## Findings

### Perspectives on a Local Food System

- Between **50-100 miles** was the maximum distance the majority considered **local**.
- There was a standard theme **defining a local food system** which included
  - Food that is grown, processed, distributed, sold within the local region
  - Farmers markets and gardens were considered part of the system
- The **benefits** of purchasing local foods could be grouped as
  - Enhancing the local economy
  - Supporting local farmers and producers
  - Better tasting, fresher food
  - Knowing where food is coming from
- Respondents would be more likely to purchase local foods if...
  - Foods were easily **accessible** and **affordable**
  - Foods were available **year round**
  - Foods were at the **grocery store**
  - Foods were **economical**
  - Foods were in a **convenient form** to use (chicken breasts vs. whole chicken)
  - Respondents **knew where** to get them
- At least **one fourth** of all respondents said they would be willing to pay **\$2** more for a restaurant meal valued at \$8, if they were guaranteed the food had been produced locally.
  - The organizational respondents were the most likely to pay more.
  - Students were the least likely to pay more.

## Food Buying Decisions

- Respondents primarily got the majority of their foods from the local grocery store because it was **convenient, out of habit**, and the **only place** generally perceived to be available.
- **Freshness, Taste, Convenience** and **Cost** are the **most important** features when people are selecting their food.
  - **Locally grown/raised** was identified by the Extension home study group.
- **Least important** features included Certified Organic, Hormone Free, Antibiotic Free, No GMO's, On Sale or Coupon Use, Easy to Prepare, Minimal Packaging, Antibiotic Free, Pesticide Free.
- **Food labels** were the preferred way to learn more about how and where food is grown and produced by all groups.
  - Students preferred **television** as the next source for information.
  - Other respondents preferred **flyers/brochures**.
- All consumer groups identified, protection of **natural resources**, consideration to **soil and water quality**, and **fair compensation to farmers**, as the most important information they would like available regarding production of their food.

## Consideration of the Food System

- Students had given the least thought to how food is produced with **35%** giving it **no thought** and **40%** giving it **some thought** but not for their food choices.
- **38%** of the community respondents and **46%** of the organizational respondents had **begun to make food choices** based on information about how and where their food is grown and produced.

## Pride of the Prairie

- Perception of the *Pride of the Prairie* concept was well supported.
  - “I think it’s a great idea. They should get the local food into grocery stores with signs that say “grown locally” with the town or area on the package”. UMM Student
  - “Excellent. Important to be inclusive of all farm types and not perpetuate polarization of conventional and non-conventional farms.” Organizational affiliate
  - “I would definitely choose locally grown food if it were easily accessible. Often times it is hard to locate, or only sold at a farmer’s market once a week.” Community member

## Opportunities

This consumer survey confirmed that there is general understanding and support for the concept of a local food system within the community of Morris, Minnesota. There is value expressed in further developing a local food system and making local foods more available. There are opportunities for further education, especially with students.

## Specific Questions Asked and Results

### *Question 1: What did you eat at your most recent meal?*

This question was used as a warm up exercise and is not reported.

### *Question 2: Did your meal include any locally grown or produced foods?*

<b>Groups Surveyed</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Community Members (34)	53%	41%
Organizational Affiliates (39)	31%	51%
Students UMM (34)	68%	29%
Extension Home Study Group (12)	42%	58%
Extension Staff (16)	56%	31%

***Question 3: What is your definition of a local food system?***

**General Themes from Community Respondents**

**Geographical Responses**

- Everything you eat is grown within a 50 mi radius
- Within 20 miles
- Food grown within Minnesota
- Milan area
- Food produced in MN, WI, ND and SD

**Components**

- Local food system would be local farms, gardens, meat markets that produce food for the people in the local area.
- Garden or farmers market
- Food locally produced, marketed, and consumed
- Food grown, processed and distributed locally
- Food grown and marketed locally
- Foods grown and used in our area
- Processed in MN
- Farming
- Local grocery store
- No middle man or large chain distribution

**Other**

- Basic four food group
- A local food system is the food needed locally within your own community
- I know my producer

**Additional Themes from Student Response:**

- Crops and such, real corn on cob, potatoes, not processed

**Additional Themes from Organizational Affiliate Response:**

- Preferably organic foods sold at a lower price than usual or at least competitive with wholesale. Local food system being with a fairly reasonable countrywide area
- No middle man or large chain distribution
- Food picked and shipped that arrive at distributor (grocery store) within about 8 hrs.

- *Question 4: If you think of local in geographic terms, what is the maximum distance you would consider local? \_50 miles    \_100 miles    \_200 miles  
\_other*

	<b>50 mi</b>	<b>100 mi</b>	<b>200 mi</b>	<b>400 mi</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Community Members (34)</b>	59%	26%	9%	0%	3%
<b>Organizational Affiliates (39)</b>	36%	24%	15%	9%	12%
<b>Students UMM (34)</b>	41%	26%	21%	12%	0%
<b>Extension Home Study Group (12)</b>	67%	8%	8%	0%	17%
<b>Extension Staff (16)</b>	19%	38%	25%	0%	19%

*Other Responses:*

- 20 miles, 25 miles, less than 30 miles, 30 miles, less than 50 miles, 75 miles, 150 miles, 200-400 miles, statewide,
- Local is as close as seasonably possible but depends on the food. Texas grapefruit is more local than Brazilian grapefruit

***Question 5: What would you consider to be benefits of purchasing local foods?***

**Themes from All Respondents:**

- Help the local economy
- Support and provide markets for local producers
- Help the community and your neighbors
- Convenience
- Less transportation
- Less cost
- Fresher food
- Produce would be ripe when picked
- Healthy products
- Know foods are safe
- Self reliance, readily available food supply
- Less use of energy
- Less use of pesticides, wax, additives, inorganic residues
- Freshness offers the possibility of quality assurance
- Increase freshness of animal feeds
- Cheaper food

**Question 6: Please check the one place where you typically get your produce:**

	Grocery	Farm	Farmers Market	Food Co-op	Rest	Garden	Other
Community Members (34)	33	2	6	1	2	5	
Organizational Affiliates (39)	33	2	4	5		11	4
Students UMM (34)	31			1	2	1	3
Extension Home Study (12)	10	1	1	2		7	1

**Other:** Community Supported Agriculture (CSA member), friends garden, family farm, food service

**Why do you make this choice?**

**Grocery Store Themes**

- Convenience
- Habit
- Not many public vegetable stands
- Store has largest selection
- The only place available
- Not much produce at the co-op and farmer's market is only open for a few weeks in summer
- Other choices only exist seasonally
- Variety and competitive pricing

**Farmers Market Themes**

- Fresher food
- Supporting local food systems

**CSA Themes**

- Don't want to poison myself and the planet, also fed up with big corporation
- Fresher food

**Food Co-op Themes**

- Prefer organic produce

**Garden Themes**

- Quality of product
- Pride in producing my own

**Farm Stand Themes**

- To support my neighbor and eat great fresh vegetables

**Question 7: What percentage of your produce do you purchase directly from a farmer/producer?**

	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	Other
Community Members (34)	16	11	1	0	0	6
Organizational Affiliates (39)	13	15	3	0	0	6
Students UMM (34)	22	7	0	3	0	1
Extension Home Study (12)	6	4	0	0	0	1

**Other:**

**Community:** 3 said 10%, 2 said 1%, 1 person said 2%

**Organizational:** 1 said 0% in winter & 50% in summer, 2 said btw 0 & 25%, 0% except sweet corn

**Students:** 1 said 5%

**Extension Home Study:** 1 said 10%

**Question 8: Please check the one place where you typically get your meat: Why do you make this choice?**

	Grocery	Farm	Farmers Market	Food Co-op	Restaurant	Local Processor	Other
Community Members (34)	18	0	2	1	1	6	4
Organizational Affiliates (39)	17	1	0	0		12	14
Students UMM (34)	26	1	0	0	1	2	4
Extension Home Study (12)	8	1				3	1

**Other:**

**Community:** Organic farmers, homegrown, hunting-2, family farm-2, foodservice

**Organizational:** Hunter, local farmer, relative, organic farmers

**Student:** Grow and butcher own, foodservice

**Extension Home Study:** local butcher

**Why do you make this choice?**

**Grocery Themes:**

- Handier
- I trust the meat men at Willies
- We know the quality
- Most convenient
- Cheap
- Close to home and can purchase other things there also
- Good selection

**Farmer/Farm stand Themes:**

- Convenient
- Family member
- Can order organic meat
- Quality, no hormones and no/little antibiotics
- Taste
- Healthier/ex. Less fat
- Know what I am getting
- Support local economy

**Restaurant Themes:**

- Convenience

**Local Processor Themes:**

- Cheaper
- Convenient
- Know what I am getting
- Hunting
- Produce own
- Support local economy

**Question 9: What percentage of your meat do you purchase directly from a farmer/producer?**

	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	Other
Community Members (34)	16	5	0	4	4	3
Organizational Affiliates (39)	12	10	4	9	2	0
Students UMM (34)	26	3	2	1	2	0
Extension Home Study (12)	7	1	0	3	1	0

**Other:** 10%-2, 2%-1

**Question 10: I would be more likely to purchase local foods of...**

**Themes from Community Member Response**

- More available in grocery stores
- It was convenient
- Knew how to purchase from them
- Need awareness of locally grown in stores
- More hours open for farmers markets
- They were economical
- They looked fresh
- They were better advertised
- I knew how they were grown

**Additional Themes from Organizational Affiliates**

- They were available, hormone free, organic, naturally grown/raised
- At Morris Farmers Market
- List of people who cater locally grown
- Available year round
- If for example, chicken could be sold in breasts as opposed to whole

**Additional Themes from Students**

- If they were sold on/very near campus

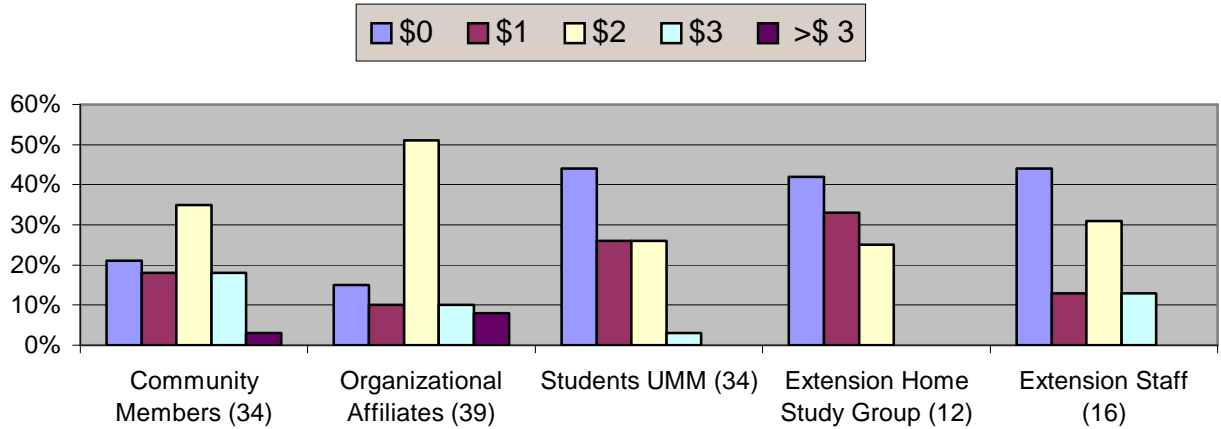
**Additional Themes from Extension Home Study**

- We knew where the meat comes from. Better labeling. Dates we understood

**Question 11: For a restaurant meal valued at \$8, how much would you pay if you were guaranteed that the food had been produced locally?**

**\_ No more    \_\$1 more    \_\$2 more    \_\$3 more    \_Greater than \$3 more**

**Willingness to Pay More for Local Food**



	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 1</b>	<b>\$ 2</b>	<b>\$ 3</b>	<b>&gt;\$ 3</b>
<b>Community Members (34)</b>	21%	18%	35%	18%	3%
<b>Organizational Affiliates (39)</b>	15%	10%	51%	10%	8%
<b>Students UMM (34)</b>	44%	26%	26%	3%	0%
<b>Extension Home Study Group (12)</b>	42%	33%	25%	0%	0%
<b>Extension Staff (16)</b>	44%	13%	31%	13%	0%

*Question 12: In general, which of the following features do you consider most important when selecting you food? (Please choose your Top Six by placing checks next to the words.)*

<b><u>Most Important When Selecting Food</u></b>				
	<b><u>Community</u></b>	<b><u>Organizational</u></b>		<b><u>Extension</u></b>
<b>Ranking</b>	<b><u>Members</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliates</u></b>	<b><u>Students</u></b>	<b><u>Home Study</u></b>
1	<b>Freshness</b>	<b>Freshness</b>	<b>Taste</b>	<b>Freshness</b>
2	<b>Taste</b>	<b>Taste</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Local</b>
3	<b>Convenience</b>	<b>Store Location</b>	<b>Freshness</b>	<b>Cost</b>
4	<b>Store Location</b>	<b>Convenience</b>	<b>Convenience</b>	<b>Store Location</b>

*Question 13: In general which features do you consider least important when selecting your food? (Please choose your Bottom Six by placing checks next to the words)*

<b><u>Least Important When Selecting Food</u></b>				
	<b><u>Community</u></b>	<b><u>Organizational</u></b>		<b><u>Extension</u></b>
<b>Ranking</b>	<b><u>Members</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliates</u></b>	<b><u>Students</u></b>	<b><u>Home Study</u></b>
1	<b>Certified Organic</b>	<b>On Sale</b>	<b>Certified Organic</b>	<b>Minimal Pkging</b>
2	<b>Hormone Free</b>	<b>Convenience</b>	<b>Pesticide Free</b>	<b>Certified Organic</b>
3	<b>Antibiotic Free</b>	<b>No GMO's</b>	<b>No Colorings</b>	<b>Hormone Free</b>
4	<b>No GMO's</b>	<b>Antibiotic Free</b>	<b>Antibiotic Free</b>	<b>Minimal Processing</b>

*Question 14: If all the following information were available to you, which would you consider most important regarding the production of your food? Choose up to six you feel most strongly about.*

- Were natural resources protected?*
- Was there consideration to soil and water quality?*
- Were the animals treated humanely?*
- Were the animals treated with hormones?*
- Were the animals treated with antibiotics?*
- Was the food grown without pesticides?*
- Was the food certified organic?*
- Was the food genetically modified?*
- Was the food produced locally?*
- Was the food produced on farms owned and operated by family farmers?*
- Did the farm workers have safe and healthy working conditions?*
- Did the farmers receive fair compensation?*

**Most Important Information Regarding the Production of Food**

Rank	<u>Community Members</u>	<u>Organizational Affiliates</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Extension Home Study</u>
1	Natural Resources	Locally Produced	Natural Resources	Locally Produced
2	Soil and Water Quality	Fair Compensation	Humane Tx Animals	Family Farm
3	No Hormones used	Soil and Water Quality	Fair Compensation	Natural Resources
4	Fair Compensation	Family Farm	No Pesticides	Fair Compensation
5	Humane Tx Animals	Natural Resources	Safe conditions	Soil and Water Quality
6	Safe conditions	No Hormones used	No Hormones used	No Antibiotics
		Safe conditions	Family Farm	No Pesticides

**Question 15: In general what have been your thoughts on how and where your food is grown and produced?**

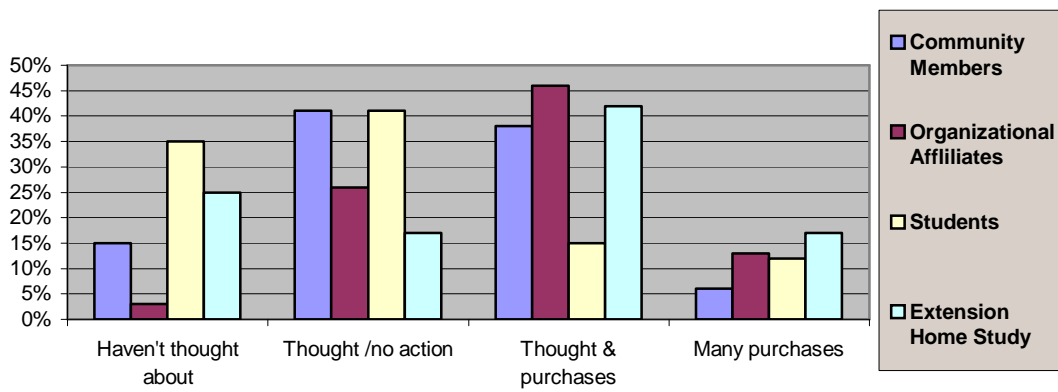
*\_\_\_ I haven't given it any thought.*

*\_\_\_ I have thought about it but haven't made food choices based on this information.*

*\_\_\_ I have begun to make food choices based on this information*

*\_\_\_ I purchase much of my food based on information about where food is grown and produced.*

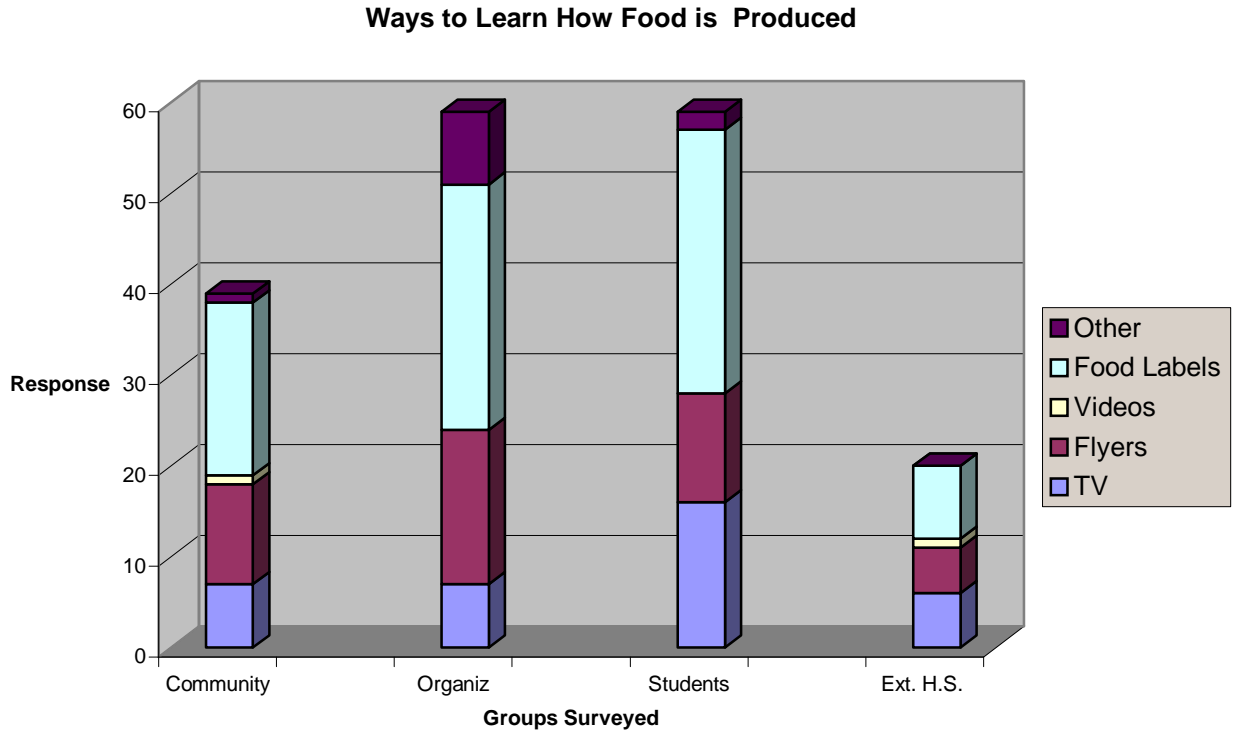
**Consideration and Purchase of Food Based on How It's Produced**



	Community Members	Organizational Affiliates	Students	Extension Home Study
Haven't thought about	15%	3%	35%	25%
Thought /no action	41%	26%	41%	17%
Thought & purchases	38%	46%	15%	42%
Many purchases	6%	13%	12%	17%

**Question 16: In what ways do you want to learn more about how and where your food is grown and produced? (check all that apply)**

**television   flyers/brochures   videos   food labels   other**



	TV	Flyers	Video	Food Labels	Other
<b>Community Members (34)</b>	7	11	1	19	1
<b>Organizational Affiliates (39)</b>	7	17	0	27	8
<b>Students UMM (34)</b>	16	12	0	29	2
<b>Extension Home Study Group (12)</b>	6	5	1	8	0

**Other:**

- From producers and processors' in my grocery store or mail
- Local and area newspapers
- Informational meetings
- Public presentations
- Workshops/presentations
- Word of mouth

*Question 17: The Pride of the Prairie initiative promotes food from local farms, and makes connections between farmers and the growing number of citizens here in the Upper Minnesota River Valley who are interested in buying local foods. Please offer your comments on how you view such an initiative:*

**Community Member Response**

- Great idea! –2
- Good idea- 4
- More farmer’s markets
- Local foods are great but they would have to compete in a world market
- Great, but overwhelming in the face of corporate America and the huge monolithic nature of conglomerations in agribusiness. It seems like a losing proposition
- I think it is a good idea and will be supported
- It’s a great idea. I would like to feed my family better quality health giving food at every meal and at school! I’d prefer that schools buy local quality, grains, flour, meat, fruits, vegetables for all our children. Less processed food would be extremely valuable at our school.
- I would definitely choose locally grown food if it were easily accessible. Often times it is hard to locate, or only sold at a farmer’s market once a week
- That communication is good!
- I am all for it and if there are any committees with openings for members I am interested
- Favorably